

Health and Family Planning Overview

GHANA



Population:	20.2 million (BUCEN 2002)
Infant Mortality:	57 (DHS 1998)
DPT3 Coverage:	72.2%, children 12–23 mos. (DHS 1998)
Nutrition:	25.9% stunting, children 0–59 mos. (DHS 1998)
Total Fertility Rate:	4.6 (DHS 1998)
Maternal Mortality Ratio:	586 (WHO/Hill 1995)
Contraceptive Prevalence Rate:	14.3%, all women, modern methods (DHS 1998)
Adult HIV Prevalence:	3.0% (UNAIDS 2001)
Number of AIDS Orphans:	200,000 (UNAIDS 2001)
Demographic and Health Surveys:	1988, 1993, 1998
Multi-Indicator Cluster Surveys:	1995

Country Profile

After eight years of constitutional democracy and a presidential election in 2000, Ghana is a role model for political and economic reform in West Africa. The government is committed to achieving middle-income status by 2020. This will require ambitious increases in economic and social growth and expanded efforts to reduce inflation, develop the work force, and promote private sector investment. Within the health sector, the country has made significant strides in improving maternal and reproductive health. The government must remain committed to its strategies for improving reproductive health, especially for young people. Health finance reform is expected as Ghana's newly elected government explores alternatives for health insurance and cost recovery, including community-based health insurance systems.

HIV/AIDS in Ghana. Ghana will need to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS if it is to maintain its economic and social progress and meet future goals. At less than 5 percent, HIV/AIDS prevalence is still relatively low. Among women, it is highest among 25- to 29-year-olds, and infections among children have increased dramatically as a result of mother-to-child HIV transmission. While awareness of prevention methods is high, there has been little apparent change in adopting preventive behaviors. Government officials have recognized that a multisectoral approach is needed to contain the epidemic. Improvements in basic education and access to health services are considered essential to keep prevalence at or below its present level.

USAID Strategy

USAID/Ghana's current strategic plan (1997–2003) emphasizes long-term economic growth through strengthened commercial production and reduced population growth. USAID is one of the largest health donors in Ghana and a major contributor to HIV/AIDS prevention and control activities, reproductive health programs, and child survival programs. Fertility reduction activities include support for improved family planning services and increased use of family planning methods. Adolescents, men, and rural populations are special target groups for these interventions.

Strategic Objective: Improved family health

Intermediate Results:

- Increased use of reproductive health services
- Increased use of selected child survival services



Major Program Areas

HIV/AIDS. USAID/Ghana and its partners have elevated the importance of HIV/AIDS at the national and local levels through advocacy efforts with high-level government officials and by including citizens from all social levels and groups in prevention campaigns. The latter include community-level condom distribution carried out by community members after recruitment and training. USAID/Ghana was instrumental in developing a draft national HIV/AIDS strategy and generating support for a multisectoral approach to prevention and control. Within the health sector, medical personnel and pharmacists are trained to treat sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and nurses are trained in HIV/AIDS counseling. The Mission also assists Ghana's uniformed services (army, navy, air force, police, and prison services) with behavior change programs and training to reduce HIV/AIDS-related stigma, fear, and discrimination. Ghana has an extensive program aimed at behavior change in such high-risk groups as professional truck drivers and sex workers. Faith-based organizations have been targeted to train preachers, women, and youth groups to spread the messages of prevention, compassion, and support for those living with HIV/AIDS. There is special emphasis on reaching Muslim youths in urban areas. USAID/Ghana has started a workplace HIV/AIDS program with 30 companies, including the entire mining sector. Ghana has one of Africa's most advanced HIV/AIDS sentinel surveillance systems as a result of USAID support, and training and technical assistance activities continue in this area. These include surveys of health behaviors and knowledge of HIV/AIDS and other STIs.

Health and Family Planning. USAID/Ghana supports improvements in the quality of family planning and safe motherhood services through in-service and preservice training of medical personnel using updated national protocols. Program developments in family planning include a policy shift toward community-based approaches and expanded training activities. The Mission continues to support contraceptive social marketing activities. USAID/Ghana is the leading supporter of the Ministry of Health's efforts to create and adapt protocols in integrated management of childhood illnesses and to train health personnel in their use. The Mission is also a primary leader in the Roll Back Malaria initiative. This public-private partnership, steered by the Ministry of Health with representation from USAID, UNICEF, WHO, and the commercial private sector, recently began commercial sales of bed nets for malaria prevention. The Mission also collaborates with UNICEF on several child health programs, including vitamin A supplementation, expansion of the vaccine cold-chain system, and enhanced immunization coverage in remote northern areas of the country. For the last three years, USAID, WHO, and the UN Foundation have collaborated to help Ghana develop and implement integrated disease surveillance and response activities. Promotion of good infant feeding practices, including breastfeeding, is another major area of support in Ghana.

Results

- More than 600 clinicians were trained in STI management and counseling.
- Condom distribution by "Stop AIDS, Love Life" doubled in two years from 9 to 18 million. The program's goals are to increase condom distribution and provide national media coverage of the HIV/AIDS situation.
- The number of Norplant acceptors increased by 290 percent over a two-year period, and 145 nurses were trained to insert Norplant.
- Fertility decreased by two children per woman over the last decade. The total fertility rate is now 4.6. Analysis has demonstrated that this decline is partially due to increased contraceptive use.
- In 2001, DPT3 coverage was 76 percent, up from 56 percent in 1997.
- Childhood mortality decreased 40 percent over the last 20 years.
- USAID-supported safe motherhood initiatives expanded to six regions and five midwifery schools in 2001.
- In 2001, USAID spearheaded a public-private partnership to promote insecticide-treated bed nets. More than 20,000 were sold.

Major Implementing Partners

USAID/Ghana's partners in implementing population, health, and nutrition activities include the Ghana Social Marketing Foundation, the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana, EngenderHealth, Africare, Abt Associates, CARE International, the PRIME II project, Family Health International, the John Hopkins University, the BASICS II project, the International Science and Technology Institute, and the Academy for Educational Development.



This USAID Health and Family Planning Overview was prepared for the Bureau for Africa, Office of Sustainable Development, by the Population, Health and Nutrition Information Project (PHNIP). Questions and comments can be directed to PHNIP (info@phnip.com).

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